

SNFU Closes Hardcore Chapter

SNFU
The Polish Hall
Friday, September 20

by Ron Kuipers and Glenn Drexhage
SNFU scalded the North American underground scene for eight years, yet it's as if they came and went like thieves in the night. Eight years sure seems like a lot of time, but looking back, it's hard to believe that it's all over. From Grunt, Groan, Rant and Rave to G.I. Joe Gets Angry With Human Kind, SNFU rose to the top of the North American hardcore heap, and they did it with style and relentless frenergy.

This band meant a lot of things to a lot of people. Their absence will not be easy to dismiss. Hundreds of bored high school kids found something to get excited about when they heard this band. SNFU opened ears to many new sounds. It's easy to look back on the salad days at Spartan's Mens Hall, but the boys from SNFU realized more than anyone else that you make your own scene. They knew you had to get off your ass and do something.

And this is why it's hard to see them go. They helped many bands during the years when Edmonton's underground music scene virtually revolved around them. But all totally fuckin' awesome things have to come to an end.

Yet everyone knew it wasn't going to end quietly. Their candle went out with a thrash and burn.

So if life is a bowl of cherries, what were we doing in the pit? Well we weren't exactly in



Ron Sears

Mr. Chi Pig of SNFU took one last kick at the can at the Polish Hall Friday night.

it, because it was enormous — a humanoid mass of flailing arms, legs, heads and fists. SNFU are less insightful than they are inciteful. Songs began, chaos ensued.

Nothing more needs to be said about the concert, except that it was the kind of performance that makes us scribes want to

coin new words and phrases. They left behind an energy that shouldn't be lost. As they said in their final ode to Edmonton, "we used to write songs." Indeed they did — total skullrip crunchsound. It's been a great eight years.

SNFU RIP.

Trolls' chubby three-shot jab explained

interview by Philip Preville

Anyone who's seen *Terrific Bunnies*, the latest show by Edmonton's comedy troupe Three Dead Trolls In a Baggie, is no doubt familiar with Wes Borg's rear end.

"Basically, we're going for the classic-comedy three-shot jab," explains Wes. "First, Neil calls me chubby early in the show. Next, Neil sets it up when he calls me chubby in the fat boy prologue, when I storm off stage."

"Then we even go to a third one, when they're all sitting on the bench laughing about how funny my bum looks on stage. At that point we are bound by comedy law to show my bum on stage. If not, people would walk out of the show saying, 'where's his bum? These guys are all talk and no action'."

This was one of the more outrageous moments of a telephone interview with the Trolls, who were in Victoria B.C. performing at that city's Fringe Theatre Festival. There are actually four members in the troupe: Joe Bird, Neil Grahns, Cathleen Rootsart and Wes Borg.

When asked about other inspirations for specific playlets, Wes explained, "the strip poker one is from the twisted mind of Neil Grahns. He says he was whacking off when he came up with it."

I suppose pulling your goalie helps get the creative juices flowing.

Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie have been together for over two years now. Their comedy cannot be described in a single word. It is at times all of political, satirical, juvenile, eclectic, twisted, perverse, and intellectual. Perhaps it is their diversity which makes the Trolls such a joy to watch.

One aspect of their comedy which definitely sets the Trolls apart is their extensive use of music. This fact is all the more amazing when you consider that they are all currently in the process of learning their instruments on their own.

"We're all learning as we go," says keyboardist/acoustic guitarist Wes, who writes most of the music along with Joe, who plays lead guitar. "When we return to Edmonton we're going to really concentrate on it and see if we can do some recording."

Wes particularly enjoys the musical aspect of their comedy. "It's integral to me, and so anything that I'm in and I'm helping create, it's gonna have to be there. We can go really good in that direction." Songwriting has not been a problem thus far for the Trolls. "Whenever we come up with an idea for

Trolls — p 10



Bowling green anarchists Wes Borg, Cathleen Rootsart, Neil Grahns and Joe Bird.

Cheng splits time between study and play

interview by Mike Spindloe

These are busy days for Angela Cheng, a gifted pianist who grew up mostly in Edmonton and now divides her time between a busy performing schedule and studies for her Doctor of Music degree at Indiana University.

For Cheng, who last performed in Edmonton at a holiday season Buchanan Hall (Alberta College) recital in 1988, these performances mark a return to the city which became her home after her family emigrated from Hong Kong in 1971.

This time around she'll be playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 three times with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra: at the Magnificent Masters Series concerts this Friday and Saturday and at the Super Sunday Matinee concert. She diplomatically refers to the piece as "maybe my favourite of the five Beethoven concertos for piano."

More specifically, she characterizes the opening movement as being "very, very dramatic. It brings out the real nobility of Beethoven. And the second movement is one of the most beautiful moments of music that I know. You feel like you are experiencing Beethoven's soul while you are playing it."

Cheng, like many of the current generation

of solo performers, has learned to "enjoy all kinds of repertoire, music from all of the periods." Indeed, her well-attended Buchanan Hall recital of last year presented a wide variety of works, with perhaps a slight emphasis on those from the 20th century.



She insists, however, that this was more coincidence than the result of any bias toward the modern masters, saying that "my real criteria is that I need to feel an emotional connection with the piece that I'm playing."

Her current schedule affords plenty of opportunity for variety, at least. "Edmonton is the only place where I'm playing the Beethoven this year," she says, adding that her sojourn here will be immediately preceded by recitals in Burlington, Vermont, and Vancouver.

Cheng is actually an alumni of the U of A Department of Music, having studied piano here for three years under the direction of Dr. Ernesto Lejano, now retired. However, she transferred to New York City's famed Juilliard School of Music to finish her Bachelors degree and has since completed a Master of Music at Indiana. Of the aura which the name Juilliard has come to hold she says "the faculty there is great, and it does attract students from all over the world, which makes it a great place to be."

Now in the doctoral program, Cheng is attempting to balance the studies she feels

are important with a burgeoning performance career. "One can never stop learning," she says. "Studies can only help you, but with my performing schedule, it's very difficult to pursue the academic part of my degree."

Being on the road also makes it difficult to practice occasionally, but Cheng still manages to find time to put in an average of six or so hours a day; a necessity when one has to maintain a memorized list of works in concert-ready condition.

It is also difficult for Cheng to find much time to spend in her hometown these days, but she likes to "try to come here as often as I can," she says. Asked whether her graduation to the concert halls and symphony orchestras means that the opportunities to hear her play in the intimate settings of venues like Buchanan Hall are over, Cheng laughs and says "those days aren't over. I still like playing recitals and I still like to play in Buchanan Hall."

And yet, Cheng's ESO concerts this weekend may be our last opportunity to hear her for quite some time. Cheng hopes that won't necessarily be the case, and also that a good-sized audience will be on hand to welcome her back.